



27th Annual Arizona Home Educators' Convention

Friday, July 23, 2010

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thank you for that introduction, David, and thank you for doing such an excellent job in directing today's event.

I am delighted to be with you this morning

I deeply believe in Arizona Families for Home Education.

I believe in what you are doing;

I believe in the freedoms you follow;

I believe you have proven that ordinary mothers and fathers working out of their living rooms, dining rooms and kitchens -- can still make a difference in our children and in our communities.

So, let me take this opportunity to thank Arizona Families for Home School Education for all you have been doing for the past 27 years -- supporting families -- supporting privately-funded, parent-led, home education.

I know you have been blessed with true pioneers. People like:

-- Tom Lewis, a former AFHE president who cultivated good relationships between homeschoolers and the Legislature ...

-- Carol Shippy, the current legislative liaison, who built on Tom's work and who is traveling and could not be here today -- for all she does for the organization and for her role in organizing Homeschool Day at the Capitol ...

-- Carol's husband, Keith, for his service as current president of AFHE ...

-- And Catherine Smith for her role in organizing the convention.

You know, I like to consider myself one of you – one of those pioneers.

One of my proudest moments as a legislator was June 17, 1994.

We had been negotiating for weeks over a variety of issues in our 9th special session that year!

But, ultimately, we succeeded in our first major school choice victory.

I was proud to cast that vote.

But even before that, I remember casting a vote in favor of SB 1225, one of the earliest pieces of legislation benefiting home school education back in 1985.

Now, look where we are today – a national leader in school choice – more importantly -- a leader in freedom.

Today, there are about 25,000 homeschool families in Arizona, producing students like James Mieding, who won 3rd place in the American Collegiate Moot Court Association National Championship.

-- Students like 14-year-old Nicholas Farnsworth, who won the Arizona State Geography Bee.

-- Students like 12-year-old Evan Moore, who won first place in Physics and Astronomy in the Junior Division of The Arizona Science and Engineering Fair.

-- And students like the Veritas Homeschoolers who won first place in the Arizona regional competition of the National Future City Competition.

I know that you may face certain challenges and difficulties throughout your homeschooling process, but please know that I am standing with you.

This year, I was pleased to sign SB 1280 -- and I greatly appreciate the work of Senator Huppenthal with the legislation. As a result of this "Transparency Bill,"

homeschoolers are ensured that they will be given fair access to scholarships which are offered to other students.

And, in May, I was pleased to sign SB 1309 -- sponsored by Senator Chuck Gray, which, at long last, declares the liberty of parents to direct the upbringing, education, health care and mental health of their children is a fundamental right.

When I took the oath of office of Governor on January 21st, 2009, I said that Arizona's version of a stimulus package was going to be something called ... "FREEDOM."

-- Freedom to work and earn a living

-- Freedom to build a business

-- Freedom to build a life.

-- And, yes, freedom for parents to decide what is best for their children's education.

I meant it then.

I mean it now.

There is no greater stimulus to our recovery -- to our success as a state -- than lifting the bonds of governmental restraints, and letting freedom ring in every classroom -- wherever it might be -- whether in a school, or at the kitchen table.

Thank you for the sacrifices you are making in order to provide for your children the education that will best suit their specific learning requirements.

I hope that you will leave this conference even more empowered in this freedom.

God bless you, God bless Arizona Families for Home Education, and God bless Arizona.

Thank you.